

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 126 128

TM 005 384

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TITLE British and American Approaches to Evaluative Studies in Education.
PUB DATE [Apr 76]
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (60th, San Francisco, California, April 19-23, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Policy; Agency Role; *Comparative Analysis; *Comparative Education; Education; *Evaluation Methods; Evolution; Federal Programs; *Foreign Countries; Information Utilization; Political Influences; Social Influences; Test Results
IDENTIFIERS England; United States

ABSTRACT

British evaluative studies in education have taken different approaches from those in America. Although there has been some interchange of ideas, the social context in the two countries is different, requiring different mechanisms for the initiation, implementation, and followup of educational evaluation. There are still lessons to be learned in this relatively new field from comparing work in the two countries, using examples from recent studies. This paper examines and compares British and American approaches, under four headings: (1) their political genesis, (2) agencies involved in commissioning and executing evaluative studies, (3) use made of results, and (4) possible evolution of these approaches. (Author)

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Abstract

British and American approaches to evaluative studies in education

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There are still lessons to be learned in this relatively new field from comparing work in the two countries, using examples from recent studies.

This paper examines and compares British and American approaches, under four headings: 1) their political genesis 2) agencies involved in commissioning and executing evaluative studies 3) use made of results 4) possible evolution of these approaches.

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British and American approaches to
evaluative studies in education

David G. Hawkrige

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Introduction

Nobody could be blamed for thinking that the title of this paper was specifically designed to be eye-catching in Bicentennial Year. The news that the author was not a candidate in the elections for a new British Prime Minister and that he does not intend to enter the Presidential race will do little to reassure those who feel the Bicentenary is being made the excuse for everything.

Indeed, isolationists will point out that America is independent now, and there is no need for a Britisher to come hot-foot to San Francisco to try to sell muskets and whiskey to the colonials. Muskets, they will say, we have enough of, home-made, and whiskey we buy from the Scotch, who are scarcely British anyway.

Why, then, did AERA accept this paper? In general terms, it is a fact that after 200 years there are differences between Britain and America, not least in their respective educational systems. More specifically, approaches to evaluative studies in education in the two countries have evolved quite differently. This paper seeks to identify many of these differences, which have come about because the social context in the two countries is different, requiring differing mechanisms for the initiation, implementation and follow-up of educational evaluation. It is true that there has been some interchange of ideas between educational evaluators on each side of the Atlantic, but the differences seem worth reporting and discussing.

No doubt readers of this paper will see it from more than one angle. Some may gain new insights into their own local situation. Some may be stimulated to attempt to apply techniques used elsewhere. Others may feel that what is right for Britain is wrong for America, and vice versa. On the other hand, it is possible that approaches used one side of the Atlantic may have sufficient intrinsic merit to be included in evaluative studies the other side.

The British and American approaches will be compared under four headings:

1) Their political genesis: The British low-key approach to educational evaluation is largely divorced from political influence, while American legislatures insist on evaluation in public education. This has been so for the past decade. The paper will discuss the differences, identifying them within their social and economic contexts.

David Hawkrige directed a series of national evaluation studies of compensatory education while at the American Institutes for Research 1967-70. Since then he has been Director of the Institute for Educational Technology at the Open University, with a major role in the evaluation of that University's activities.

2) The agencies involved in commissioning and executing evaluative studies: Although both Britain and America have public education systems at elementary, secondary and tertiary levels, the two countries have very different agencies for the commissioning of evaluative studies at the behest of political sources, and for executing the studies. Consequently, different patterns of forces are set up between evaluators, the evaluated and the clients. Accountability is a concept which differs in power and connotation in the two countries. The nature of evaluative studies is strongly influenced, needless to say, by the commissioning and executing agencies. There are major differences in evaluative 'styles', some of which can be traced back to different philosophical and ethical standpoints.

3) The use made of results: Just as there are differences in the ways evaluative studies originate and proceed in Britain and America there are also differences in the expected and actual use made of results. In both countries, the results of evaluative studies are frequently dismissed by those to whom they are unfavourable. That is simply human nature. There are differences, however, in the expectations of agencies and of the evaluated, and these can be explained at least partially by an analysis of the context of the studies.

4) Possible evolution of these approaches: Powerful political and economic forces are likely to bring about changes in the approaches employed in educational evaluation in both countries. In Britain, persistent economic crisis seems likely to reduce funds for evaluation, in spite of calls for greater cost-effectiveness. In America, political problems arising from trenchant minority groups, coupled with some disillusionment with scientism among middle-class people, may lead to greater use of illuminative approaches to evaluation. If there is a decline in belief in capitalism and consumerism, there may also come a change in stress, from summative to formative evaluation. All of this, of course, is in the realm of speculation, and is not based on systematic 'futures' research.

What conclusions and recommendations are there with which to end the paper? None, since it is essentially contemplative. No experimental results are being reported, no hypotheses are being tested, and there will be no recommendations for further research. Instead, the questions raised by the comparison may stimulate some worthwhile discussion.

Definitions and examples

Few people will quarrel with Popham's (1975) statement that the generally accepted definition of evaluation is "a determination of value". Evaluation is clearly the business of judging value, by whatever means at our disposal. Pretentiously, the word can be applied when judgements are being made about electric razors or tennis balls, although significantly in these cases it is commoner to speak of quality control. More generally, evaluation is a term used when judgements are being made about policies and people.

As Popham points out, educational evaluation as a process is not new, if we include under that term all the determinations of value that have taken place within education for centuries. What interests him is systematic evaluation in education, a formal (institutionalised?) kind, which he calls genuine. Indeed, the title of this paper may come close to satisfying Popham. 'Evaluative studies in education' attempt to determine the value of something

educational by studying it, usually systematically, if not scientifically.

Such terms as educational evaluation and evaluative studies in education are really too all-inclusive, however, even with the Popham provisos regarding formality and system. Judgements of value are being made every day in countless educational establishments, often in a formal and systematic fashion, without anyone calling that activity educational evaluation. Educational research and development is full of determinations of value, yet many of the professionals engaged in this field would not think of themselves as educational evaluators. What, then, are we talking about? How can we justifiably narrow down the definition to acceptable limits, at least for the purposes of this paper?

First, like Popham, we can throw out determinations of the educational standing of individuals, which he labels educational measurement or status determination.

Second, if we like we can also eliminate all studies that are private. The number is not great. We can say we are interested in educational evaluation that is public. Laymen and members of the general body politic should have access to such studies.

Third, and similarly, we can restrict our discussion to the evaluation of public education, whether at the national, regional or local level. In both Britain and America, well over 90% of education depends upon the public purse.

We may not throw out studies which do not explicitly set out to evaluate, but do so. There are educators and researchers who claim that they are doing no more than present the facts, leaving the interpretation, determination and judgement to others. These people ignore the judgements they make in selecting the ways they go about collecting, analysing and summarising data.

Nor may we throw out studies which are not addressed to the 'true' clientele, the students. The improvement of education is the general goal, set for the benefit of society at large and the students of a generation in particular. We must include evaluative studies that contribute to the reaching of that goal, even when they are addressed to State officials, or the Queen on behalf of her government.

Within our range must be studies that differ radically in their methods. We may go as far as including the evidence-collecting of a Senate Committee as well as the detailed quantitative analysis probably required in evaluative study of a new computer-assisted way of learning celestial navigation in the Air Force. Scriven (1967) and others since have indicated the diversity of methods that may be employed.

In the end, we shall probably discover that most of the studies we have in mind share one characteristic: they enrich the debate on matters of educational policy. Evaluators may intend that their studies should actually sway the debate firmly in one direction or another. For example, McDaniels (1975) writing about Follow Through evaluation, says 'And, at last, we may soon be able to demonstrate that compensatory education works'. Time and time again, however, evaluators observe that politicians and officials, educators and students use their reports in unexpected ways to suit particular purposes. The role of government and the people in bringing about change cannot be ignored by educational evaluators or anyone else.

Educational evaluation is a fuzzy set. The boundaries of the set are not adequately defined by the adjectives that are attached to the term: formal institutionalised, systematic, not-specific-to-individuals, and so on. It is very tempting to seek further clarification by probing the philosophical position of particular educational evaluators. Are they rational objectivists, for example? That is to say, do they take the view that education can be improved through Man's rational behaviour, through objective study of what is going on? Or are they creative humanists, watching for the artistic leap apparently unrelated to values held or knowledge gained? Are they reformers at heart, always hoping that something better can come from their evaluative activities? Or is there a battle among educational evaluators (and their clients) between the forces of scientism and those of intuition (Hawkrige, 1970)?

In fact, educational evaluators, consciously or otherwise, take up many philosophical positions and adopt many roles (Hawkrige, 1975a). Later we shall note some national differences, but this is not the occasion to explore the wide range of positions and roles (see also Hamilton et al., in press).

There is one further way open to us in attempting to define the set: by giving examples. To be precise, we would have to provide examples that just came within the set and oppose them with others that just feel outside the set. That too is a more extensive exercise than can be tackled in this particular paper, therefore Table 1 simply provides a few British and American examples, belonging to the last ten years; many will be familiar to AERA members.

Table 1 Some examples of British and American evaluative studies in education.

British

The Halsey Report on the education of culturally-disadvantaged children
 The Russell Report on adult education
 The Bullock Report on children's reading
 The James Report on teacher education
 Evaluative studies of Schools Council curriculum projects (see Table 4)
 Evaluative studies of Nuffield Foundation curriculum projects
 UNCAL: Evaluation of the National Development Programme in Computer-Assisted Learning
 The Open University's program of self-evaluation

American

Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I Evaluation
 Head Start Evaluation
 Follow Through Evaluation
 The Coleman Report on educational opportunity
 Indian Education Act Evaluation
 Upward Bound Evaluation
 Teacher Corps Evaluation
 Experimental Schools Project Evaluation

Besides attempting to define educational evaluation, we need some definitions of the American and British education systems. American education, while certainly not homogeneous, does at least have a relatively simple three-level structure of government (Federal, State and Local). Britain (that is to say, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) has a hybrid governmental structure for its education. Northern Ireland we cannot speak of knowing that what we say will still be true tomorrow, because changes there have followed swiftly upon one another in recent years, but at present its educational system is controlled from London. Scotland has its own Scottish Education Department, under the Secretary of State for Scotland, a Cabinet Minister at Westminster with responsibility for other portfolios as well as education. But this person is not responsible for the Scottish universities, which are under the Department of Education and Science in London, along with primary, secondary and tertiary education in both England and Wales. Making generalisations about British education is therefore even more dangerous than doing so about American education.

When American education switched recently from using the term 'School Districts' to the term 'Local Education Agencies', this introduced a further potential source of confusion, because in Britain there are Local Education Authorities, abbreviated to LEAs, just like the American agencies. There are two important differences, however, and these should be noted. First, the average British LEA is a larger unit than its American counterpart. For example, there are only 145 LEAs in England. Second, the British LEA is tied closely to the so-called local (County Council) government, which is closer to being regional in American terms. County Councils are controlled by one political party or another, and they can be compared with State legislatures. Table 2 attempts to clarify the position.

Table 2 Levels of government and administration in British and American education.

Level	British	American
National	Parliament*	Congress*
	Department of Education & Science (England, Wales & N. Ireland)	Department of Health, Education & Welfare
	Scottish Education Department	
Regional	County councils*	State legislatures*
	Local Education Authorities	State education departments
Local	School governors*	Boards of Education*
	Individual schools	Local Education Agencies (LEAs)

* Elected, or at least politically influenced.

The political genesis of British and American evaluative studies

Politicians, to say nothing of civil servants, fall into two groups: those who consciously consider educational evaluation and those who do not. Members of both groups will be found in Washington as well as London, but certainly there are more of the latter in London. Similarly, politicians fall into two camps over the value of evaluation in education. There are those who say we cannot afford it: the decisions will be taken anyway and in the light of many factors outside the scope of educational evaluation. Opposing them are those who say we cannot afford not to have educational evaluation as without it wrong and costly decisions will be taken, affecting the lives of thousands of students.

In Britain at the national level, the politicians are largely ignorant about formal educational evaluation, in spite of the fact that education is a highly political arena. They would not find this a startling allegation: they have their priorities, and educational evaluation as such is not among these. Educational evaluation does not feature as such in any piece of current British legislation, so far as this author has been able to discover. It does not merit a separate line in the national educational budget authorised by Parliament, nor is it built into educational policy. It has not been the topic of an educational debate in either the House of Commons or the House of Lords during the past six years.

The major reason for this apparent lack of interest possibly lies in the fact that in the short-term (3-5 years ahead, let us say) nearly all educational expenditure is predetermined in Britain, and the margin for change of any kind is very small indeed (Fowler, 1974). In other words, policy change is drastically limited by shortage of cash over and above what is required to keep the system going.

Reviews of policy do occur, however, and changes in British education over the past twenty years have been quite remarkable considering how small this fiscal margin is said to be (see Kogan and Packwood, 1974). The reviews take place mainly within the Department of Education and Science and the Scottish Department of Education. In these departments there is greater awareness and knowledge of educational evaluation than in Parliament, but in the broad sense of making judgements of value, without studies being undertaken of existing programs. A recent policy review, leading to the 1972 White Paper entitled Education: a framework for expansion, was not based upon extensive educational evaluation of the American kind, but it led to the establishment of new priorities by Parliament. The implementation of these new priorities began shortly afterwards, but again it was not accompanied by massive, formal educational evaluation. Instead, Fowler (1974) tells us that the progress in achieving the implementation of the new priorities was to be 'constantly monitored'. (Fowler should know: he was a Labour Cabinet Minister up to 1970, and became one again in 1974 when Labour returned to power. He is at present Minister of State for Education and Science.)

It would be wrong to think that this constant monitoring consists solely of bureaucratic temperature-taking in the political waters. While it is true that the two Departments have a good information network (the Department of Education and Science has 500 inspectors spread throughout the territory it covers, for example), there are other ways of monitoring progress, among which is some educational evaluation. What is clear, however, is that more

often than not the chain of influence is tenuous between the political masters and the educational evaluators. The latter are few in number and only indirectly responsive to political pressures from Westminster.

By contrast, Congress takes a more intimate interest in educational evaluation. HR 69, passed by the US House of Representatives on March 28, 1974, directed the National Institute of Education to carry out a thorough evaluation of compensatory education programs. This was by no means the first piece of legislation to carry such a message. Robert Kennedy's amendment to the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act called for similar action, and made evaluation a condition for the money being granted. The fact that for some years (perhaps to this day) a large number of programs were implemented without well-designed evaluation is neither here nor there: the political will to evaluate educational programs was expressed years ago in America. Every major change in Federal education policy in the past decade has been accompanied by legislation which included clauses requiring evaluation and making financial provision for the work to be done (see McLaughlin, 1975, for a history of Title I).

Why did this happen in America, yet not in Britain? Economic conditions favoured a particular course of action. Clark (1976) claims that the Federal investment in educational research and development (including educational evaluation) is now approaching \$200 millions. This sum is over and above the funds provided by state and local sources for the regular provision of education, plus the massive funds offered by the Federal Government to support special services. The allocation of such large sums was possible during the times of boom in the late sixties. Not only could Congress afford to set up new interventionist programs, it could also afford to have them evaluated. Some Congressmen wanted to have them evaluated because of a basic belief in the ineffectiveness of such educational expenditure; others felt that the best defence against the former group would be found in evaluation data. These political forces are still to be seen in Congress today.

The regional level reveals a similar pattern of comparison. State legislatures have enacted laws requiring evaluation to be built into educational programs.* In Britain, the County Councils have not shown interest in educational evaluation as such, although there have been many fierce political battles in them over educational policy, such as the move from the tripartite system (grammar, modern and technical) of secondary schooling to the new comprehensives. In these battles few councillors if any have proposed that there should be formal evaluation of the new schools and their curricula.

At the local level many American school districts live with accountability. As Stake (1973) says, accountability means keeping good records and making actions open-to-view, strictly speaking. Control of the schools by local communities has worked well in America, he thinks, and the new State accountability and evaluation legislation may have adverse affects at local level (see also Murphy and Cohen, 1974). Yet local political forces in America tend to support rather than work against accountability. School boards are elected, and school superintendents are appointed on short-term contract in many cases. Discontent among parents can rapidly lead to recall elections. Evaluation becomes desirable under these circumstances, from the point of view of the elected, who wish to defend their policy choices, and from the point of view of the electors, who seek evidence that their money is being well spent.

* For example, California Senate Bill 28 (the Unruh Bill) set up a special fund to support reading programs for the disadvantaged, and required the evaluation of these programs.

In Britain formal evaluation simply does not exist at the local level. Local autonomy rests very much in the hands of the principal of each school. He is responsible to the County Education Officer, and has tenure, like the Officer. The latter, with his staff, work under the political control of the County Council, which usually has an Education Committee. The practical balance of power between Officer and Council varies, but the Officer is responsible for giving executive effect to law and regulations as well as carrying out county policy (Fowler, 1974b). The Council is not his sole political master.

Butt (1972) has this to say about evaluation at the local level in Britain:

'It is a tradition of the British education system to leave headmasters, teachers and parents as much freedom as possible to determine the type and methods of instruction in schools. This makes any attempt by a local education authority to lay down objectives and to assess performance against them a potentially misleading exercise.'

In summary, the political genesis of evaluative studies in education is easily discovered in America: it is in the law-making bodies, which have taken it upon themselves to demand educational evaluation. This genesis is much harder to locate in Britain, partly because formal educational evaluation does not seem to be part of the political scene. If politicians in Britain are wanting to see evaluative studies carried out, they are not saying so in Parliament, or in the County Councils, the two main political fora for education. Yet British studies exist. Their genesis is not obviously a political one.

The agencies commissioning and executing evaluative studies

The political decisions taken by the British Parliament regarding education are implemented through the two Departments of Education already mentioned, and through the County Councils. At both these levels the political bodies are served by powerful administrations or bureaucracies. At the national level, the officials carry out educational policy reviews, after which major changes in policy must be put to Parliament by the Minister. Lesser changes can be ordained by regulation. Sometimes these reviews take into account or actually call for evaluative studies. It is difficult to decide whether many of these studies are commissioned with the knowledge or consent or indeed at the behest of politicians, as we have indicated, but the Departments do have funds for such purposes. The studies are usually commissioned from academics. Thus Halsey (1972) undertook an important study of problems and policies relating to culturally disadvantaged children in Britain. More recently, the Department of Education and Science funded an evaluative study of a group of 18-20 year old students admitted to the Open University under a pilot scheme. The political genesis for such studies may lie with the Minister, advised by his civil servants. It is very unlikely that the Minister's Party, the Cabinet or a coterie of members for Parliament would be directly involved.

Occasionally the Department of Education and Science provides funds to another body and asks that body to commission evaluation. As is being reported by David Jenkins in this session, the evaluation study called UNCAL is commissioned by the National Development Programme in Computer-Assisted Learning, which is funded by the Department through Britain's Council for Educational Technology (see MacDonald *et al.*, 1975).

The apparent lack of interest in the Department of Education and Science in large-scale formal educational evaluation may be related to the fact that the Department controls directly only 3% of the non-university level expenditure on education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (Fowler, 1974c). Much of the revenue for education is raised through local taxes (rates), but this is subsidised by central government through the Rate Support Grants. To complicate matters, these grants are made for all local services and are passed through the Department of the Environment, not the Department of Education and Science! This diffusion of power may actually prevent the build-up of interest in and demand for educational evaluation.

The Central Advisory Councils for Education for both England and Wales have commissioned evaluative studies to strengthen the advice they offer to successive central governments. For example, the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) has published influential reports of vital significance. Known by the name of the current chairman of the Council, three of these were the Crowther Report on education for 15 to 18 year olds, the Newsom Report on non-academic secondary school students, and the Plowden Report on primary and pre-school education. These were evaluative studies drawing upon a wide pool of knowledge and experience, particularly from the universities, and using government money for the purpose. Yet it must be said that there was no formal educational evaluation in the Popham sense. The reports were far closer to the American report To Improve Learning than to the Coleman Report on educational opportunity.

There are certainly other British institutions which operate at the national (or near-national, Scotland sometimes being excepted from their aegis) level through which educational evaluation studies can be commissioned. For example, for the past ten years there has been the Schools Council, an organisation particularly interested in curriculum reform, teaching and school examinations, in England and Wales. It is funded jointly by the Department of Education and Science and the LEAs and has taken over much of the work done early in the 1960s under grants for curriculum development from the Nuffield Foundation. The Schools Council is led by professionals (its present Director is a university professor) and has a good record of commissioning evaluation of its projects. These evaluative studies have been the logical concomitant of the curriculum projects (see, for example, Nuttall, 1971; Badcock, 1972; Schools Council, 1973a, 1973b; Nuttall, Backhouse and Willmott, 1974).

There remain to be mentioned among the commissioning agencies a few trusts and charitable foundations. In educational evaluation, the most prominent of these has been the Nuffield Foundation, the smaller British equivalent of the Ford Foundation in America. Many of the projects supported by the Foundation have been subjected to evaluation, commissioned by the Foundation itself.

What are the agencies in Britain that execute evaluative studies in education commissioned by the bodies already mentioned? Undoubtedly, the universities take most of the work. There are virtually no non-profit organisations in the field, and not a single commercial company. In the past, there have been some commercial and non-profit ventures, but there is nobody willing now to pay the full cost of extensive educational evaluation. Table 3 shows the chief agencies that have been responsible for commissioning evaluative studies in education in Britain. It also shows the executing agencies.

Table 3 British agencies commissioning and executing evaluative studies in education.

Commissioning agencies	Executing agencies
Department of Education and Science	Mainly universities
Scottish Education Department	Mainly universities
Central Advisory Councils for Education	Universities
Social Science Research Council	Universities, polytechnics, LEAs and NFER
Nuffield and other foundations	Mainly universities
Schools Council	Universities, NFER

Table 4 shows the responsible agency for a short list of Schools Council evaluation studies. The list may not be entirely representative, but the dominance of universities is striking. They are the bases for many of the projects, and their staff do the evaluation as well.

Table 4 Executing agencies for some British Schools Council evaluative studies.

Project	Executing agency
Science 5-13	University of Bristol
School Classics	Cambridge University
Sixth Form Mathematics	Reading University
Integrated Studies	Keele University
Humanities Curriculum	University of East Anglia
Mathematics for the Majority	University of Exeter
English for Immigrants	Leeds University
Project Technology	Keele University
Secondary Science	Chelsea College of Science and Technology (University of London)
Bilingual Education in Wales	University College, Aberystwyth

In addition to the universities, there is the National Foundation for Educational Research (in England and Wales) and the Scottish Council for Educational Research. Neither of these is a trust like the Ford Foundation. Their funding comes partly from the sale of tests and partly from the Government direct, but they also receive grants through the bidding to the Social Science Research Council, chiefly to that Council's Educational

Research Board. This Board operates almost entirely in reactive mode, recommending to the Council the funding of technically sound proposals. As the titles of the two Foundations and the Board indicate, their main concern is general educational research, not specifically educational evaluation. They are far enough removed from politics for most of the evaluative studies linked with their names to have been funded for educators' reasons rather than politicians'.

The picture of commissioning agencies in America is far more complex than the British one. As we have seen, the funding of American educational evaluation is by authorisation at the Congressional or State legislature levels; the political authority exercises detailed control over departmental budgets. Once the funds are authorised, the commissioning agencies are the bureaucracies at Federal and State levels. AERA members do not need to be reminded that the principal Federal commissioning agency for evaluative studies in American education is the US Office of Education, followed by the National Institute of Education. Within the former are various bureaux, and under the latter are the Regional Educational Laboratories and the Research and Development Centres. The 50 State Offices of Education are commissioning an increasing number of evaluations, using funds from Federal and State sources. At the local level, Boards of Education now commission evaluative studies, although they usually collaborate with Federal and State evaluations.

In addition to the large number of different agencies directly involved in education and commissioning evaluative studies, we have to bear in mind other Federal and State departments with an interest in evaluating educational programs. The Office of Economic Opportunity, for example, has taken a keen interest in educational evaluation, particularly in programs such as the Job Corps. Similarly, the Department of Labour has directed its attention towards industrial training and its evaluation. Sometimes the White House itself has directed that evaluative studies should be commissioned. Specialist bodies such as the National Council for the Education of Disadvantaged children also have had limited funds at their disposal for evaluation. The number of evaluative studies contemplated by Federal commissioning agencies is high, as inspection of almost any issue of the Commerce Business Daily will show: add to this number of those at State and Local levels and the picture is one of considerable activity.

Outside the public sector there are private foundations, such as the Ford Foundation, which have taken a more active role in educational evaluation than any in Britain (except perhaps the Nuffield Foundation). Moreover, there are professional associations, such as AERA, which foster the development of educational evaluation, if not by commissioning studies then by training staff and undertaking reviews of the state of the art.

So much for the commissioning agencies. The picture of the executing agencies in America is even more complex. In the past, the universities dominated, as in Britain. Today, evaluative studies are carried out by universities, non-profit research organisations, for-profit companies, LEAs, State Offices of Education, and so on. These agencies are in many cases competing against each other in bidding for contracts for evaluations. It is quite possible that a research company in California will obtain a contract from USOE in Washington for an evaluation of Federally-funded projects in a score of states spread across the nation. Moreover, there is no assurance that the same projects will be evaluated by the same company, funded by USOE, the following year. Nor is there any assurance that the same project will not

be the subject of two evaluative studies, commissioned by different agencies at roughly the same time.

This brief and not very detailed description of the commissioning and executing agencies in the two countries is sufficient for us to start an examination of the patterns of forces that are built up, in Britain and America, between the commissioning agencies (whom we may call the clients - whether or not they are the ultimate clients), the evaluators and the evaluated. The topic is vast, but it is worth making a few observations on the differences between the two countries.

In Britain, since the amount of educational evaluation (as defined in this paper) is rather low, there is no 'profession' of educational evaluation. Nor is there a bureaucracy at central or regional levels devoting itself to commissioning evaluation to be carried out by such professionals. Nor is there a great expectation on the part of those in the schools and other parts of the educational system that formal evaluation will take place. There have been a few attempts to formalise evaluation as a particular branch of educational endeavour. For example, the Social Science Research Council and the Schools Council have sponsored small-scale seminars (see MacDonald and Walker, 1974). But there is no Centre for the Study of Evaluation, as there is in Los Angeles, complete with its own journal., Evaluation Comment. It is significant that most of the entries in a book to be published in England and America (Hamilton et al., in press) on alternative curriculum evaluation are in fact American in origin. An earlier book on curriculum evaluation published by the National Foundation for Educational Research (Wiseman and Pidgeon, 1970), drew heavily on American work, endorsing the Tyler approach.

Indeed, evaluation studies in Britain have been of an a most intimate nature (for example, Simons, 1971). As we have seen, many of them have been carried out by staff attached to the project being evaluated, therefore evaluators and evaluated have had to live together. Even the commissioning agencies have not been far away: their officials have in many cases taken a close and personal interest in both the project and its evaluation.

This intimacy is exemplified most clearly in the Open University. The Open University contains the commissioning agency, the evaluated and the evaluators, bound together inextricably. If the University decides it wishes to have its courses evaluated, the decision is taken by a committee made up of staff who have made the courses and staff who will carry out the evaluation. Sometimes the same individuals occupy a double role. In this context, the notion of accountability cuts both ways: the evaluated wish to be seen to be accountable in terms of the quality of the courses they have produced and their willingness to make sensible modifications, while the evaluators wish to be seen to be accountable in terms of the quality, validity and utility of the evaluative studies they undertake. The course makers may depend upon a favourable judgement of merit of their course in order to procure funding for further courses or a modified version of the original course. The evaluators depend upon the course makers' votes to sustain their activities and maintain the credibility of their image in the University. In such a symbiotic relationship, there may be some internal politicking (as indeed there is at the Open University) but the general aim held in view is the good of the institution and its students. Subsidiary goals of the evaluated and the evaluators are discussed quite openly.

In stark contrast, the vertices of the American 'triangle' of agencies and the evaluated are much further apart. The commissioning agencies operate

a model founded upon Western scientism, with technological and commercial overtones. There are many underlying assumptions, of which only one or two can be mentioned here. For example, assumptions are made about the possibility of predicting outcomes in education: if only the objectives of programmes can be specified accurately enough, and the treatment replicated precisely, with a similar student population one should be able to obtain similar results. Evaluative studies are frequently aimed at confirming this model, as in the Follow Through case quoted earlier. A product ideology supports these assumptions. Education is seen as an industry, and evaluation as quality control of products or at least of processes. Where, as in compensatory education, the processes appear to be turning out inadequate products, attention is focussed on changing the processes. Of course, this approach has its critics (such as House, 1973; Eisner, 1975), and many variations (see Borich, 1974; Anderson et al. 1975). In general, however, the commissioning agencies are under strong political pressures, as we have seen, to show that money being spent on educational programs is not being wasted. Because the pressure is political, they attempt to depoliticise the evaluation process by putting it on a commercial and apparently objective basis. Contracts for evaluative studies are not awarded on a political basis but on criteria related to cost and technical excellence of the proposals received. The market economy pervades the bidding procedures, as the 'boiler-plate' of any USOE Work Statement (specifying the work to be done) shows. Popham (1975) has noted the mushroom growth of private educational evaluation companies willing to conform to these procedures in order to make money.

In these circumstances, the bidding agencies, that is, the evaluators are expected to behave like bidders for engineering contracts. They are not encouraged to develop tight links with the commissioning agencies (although some do), for fear of corrupt practices. In turn, the evaluated see the commissioning agencies as sitting in judgement upon them, through the issuing of contracts to the evaluators. Evaluators must be received with respect, but it seems advisable not to tell them too much.

With the vertices so far apart, it is not really surprising that the commissioning agencies find it difficult to use the evaluation reports, the evaluated complain that the reports miss the point all too often, and the evaluators feel they cannot win. Fortunately for the latter, the political pressures continue, leading the commissioning agencies to issue more requests for proposal, and the cycle is repeated. What is far from obvious is that the repetition of the cycles leads to real improvement in the programs being evaluated.

This description of evaluation in America may be overdrawn, or the British scene may have been underdrawn, for that matter. It is significant, however, that in Britain there has been a rapid growth of an evaluative 'style' called illuminative evaluation, which is suited to the intimate working relationships that prevail there, although its use was first described in a study undertaken by Parlett at MIT (see Parlett and Hamilton, 1972). In America, there has been a proliferation of large-scale studies at the Federal level, even though there has also been an increase in State-sponsored evaluation. Bell (1975), US Commissioner of Education, claimed that consumer activism finds a natural focal point in education and urged educational researchers (including evaluators) to establish a 'more productive relationship' with the consumers, through the commissioning agencies, of course. It appears that the consumers want results, preferably quantitative ones. Illuminative evaluation would not be enough, although

there is some sympathy among American evaluators for such non-quantitative approaches as anthropological field methods (Lutz and Ramsey, 1974), case studies (Smith and Keith, 1971), and transactional evaluation (Piphey, 1973), the latter being concerned with uncovering the satisfactions and apprehensions of persons involved in institutional change. The consumers' demands are conveyed to the evaluators by the commissioning agencies, who prepare very much more detailed Work Statements than used to be the case a few years ago, thereby constraining the evaluators' approaches. What is interesting to note, however, is that the consumers in America are not necessarily the evaluated. Often they are outside the magic triangle we have been examining, exerting massive pressure on the vertex occupied by the commissioning agencies. No wonder the triangle gets bent! No wonder so many papers at AERA are devoted to responding to this pressure!

That sounds like an attack upon America. It is not meant to be one. The bumbling, under-financed approach to educational evaluation in Britain is equally open to attack for those who wish to fight back. What this paper is trying to illustrate, more or less objectively, are the considerable differences between educational evaluation in the two countries. Some of these can be traced back to different philosophical and ethical standpoints.

The use made of results of evaluative studies

How are the results of evaluative studies used in Britain and America? In both countries, of course, they are frequently dismissed by those to whom they are unfavourable. That is simply human nature. It is simple enough to find faults in the studies and to declare them invalid. There is a long history of such declarations in America: the samples were not properly drawn, there were no control groups, the tests were biased, the treatment was not replicated accurately, the funds were inadequate, and so on. Some of these disparaging noises are made about evaluative studies in Britain too, regardless whether illuminative evaluation has been practised or not.

The real differences are to be observed in following up what happens as a result of the evaluators' reports. In Britain, the reports are fed into policy reviews, whether at national or regional level, and enrich the debate among officials, seldom among politicians. Parliament may have a short debate upon, say, the Bullock Report on reading, but the changes in policy to give effect to its recommendations are more often than not implemented through the bureaucracies. In America, as we have already noted, politicians actually take note of the reports or summaries of them where the number is too large, and use them as political ammunition at all levels to influence legislation and funding. Educational practice in the classrooms may actually be changed over a short time-scale as a consequence. There is an inherent instability in the system, hence an openness to change. In Britain, the commissioning agencies ponder on the studies produced by the evaluators, consult the evaluated, and, over a much longer time-scale, move towards new policies.

In America, there is an expectation among the commissioning agencies that evaluation reports will be tied directly to policy-making and change. Why have evaluation if it is not to influence decision-making? The evaluated tolerate the studies because they have to, and hope to come well out of them, perhaps even with additional funding. In Britain, the evaluated have little

confidence that the results will sway opinion and they think that other factors will prove more important in the final analysis. They are not obliged to accept evaluation in most cases, therefore their attitudes towards the evaluators may be markedly less sympathetic than those of their American counterparts.

These differences can be illustrated by comparing the University of Mid-America with the Open University. Both institutions are funded at the national level. Evaluation is part of their philosophies. At the University of Mid-America, however, there is the atmosphere of an experiment. Indeed, in 1974 President Varner said of the State University of Nebraska (the forerunner and associate institution of the University of Mid-America) that if the results showed that it was not succeeding it should be closed down. He set a time-scale of a very few years in which to show success. Funding from Washington was granted on such a basis. By contrast, the Open University was established under a national political initiative and a Royal Charter which assured it of a less experimental and precarious existence during its infancy. It was not free from political attack, as press reports show (Hawkrige, 1975b), but it was set up as an institution rather than as an experiment. The University of Mid-America is presumably still experimental, with evaluation reports flowing steadily to Washington and providing a basis for judgements about its future. The Open University carries out self-evaluation to improve its functioning, but receives its funding on the basis of overall assessments of the needs of British higher education and the Government's spending priorities. It is not required to provide evaluation reports; instead, it submits bids for funds based on plans for the future rather than retrospection. Its continuation is practically guaranteed, although there may be debate about the level of support and certain aspects of the University's development.

Similar examples can be drawn from curriculum development and diffusion projects in the two countries, as reported recently by Harding, Kelly and Nocodemus (1976), although these authors point out that generalisations are difficult to formulate in the British case.

Possible evolution of British and American approaches to evaluation

We now enter the realm of pure speculation, although our speculations may be informed by what we have observed. AERA members feel that powerful political and economic forces are likely to bring about changes in the approaches employed in educational evaluation in America, if the program for the 1976 Annual Meeting is anything to go by. Among the political forces, trenchant disadvantaged minority groups are combining with middle-class people disillusioned with scientism in calling for less use of achievement tests and more attention to affective issues. Will they win the day? If so, will there be an increase in approaches similar to British illuminative evaluation? Or will these approaches be seen as too distant from public policy decisions to be worthwhile?

Alternatively, it is just possible that in America values will change so much that education will decline in importance. The AERA session on 'Over-education' may be taken as an early warning. If capitalism and the urge to increase production fall into disrepute, then consumerism may also become less favoured. The current emphasis in America upon successful development (and testing) of educational products - being packages or processes or

programs, but not people - may change as a more humanistic approach gains hold. Will the day come when Americans are willing to transfer to needy communities large sums of money without requiring accountability? If so, shall we see then a swing from summative to formative evaluation? A change from emphasising the quality of the product to emphasising the broad social goals to be achieved and ways to help people to get there?

Perhaps we are descending now towards mere rhetoric. After all, the work done by American educational policy research centres does not yet give us a strong basis on which to project future trends. On the other hand, this AERA meeting features sessions such as the ones entitled 'An end of affluence: educational evaluation in tight money times', and 'Confidentiality of data versus the right to know: new problems for educational researchers'. These indicate the times are a-changing.

What about in Britain? What changes are likely there? The most obvious one appears to be towards less educational evaluation. It is true that some bodies are beating the drum of cost-effectiveness, saying that in times of economic crisis there should be more evaluation in order to weed out what is not effective and to enhance whatever works. But hardly anybody is listening. The shortage of funds in education is likely to become so damaging that all energies will be devoted to keeping the system viable. Declining birth rates are already leading to closure of schools and reductions in the number of teachers being trained. It seems unlikely that this trend will be reversed. Under such circumstances, educational evaluation of the kind we have been discussing looks like a quite luxurious frill to be added to prestige projects. Even at an institution like the Open University, tough questions are probably going to be asked, like 'Should we evaluate the existing courses, or use the money to add to our relatively slender stock of courses?'. When one considers that in British education the vast majority of staff at all levels have tenure, either by virtue of their conditions of service or through recent legislation passed by Parliament, the room for manoeuvre in hard times is cut down drastically.

This pessimistic account of the future for educational evaluation in Britain should not be taken to mean that there will not be qualitative changes too. Illuminative evaluation, although upon many people's lips, is still something of an untried approach. A great many hard-line educational, sociological and psychological researchers who may be associated with educational evaluation are not yet convinced that illuminative techniques are replicable, learnable or even useful. They stand by their older methods. (Likewise, ethnomethodology is a word which appears in certain journals but not yet in standard dictionaries.) Will illuminative evaluators be around in ten years' time? Probably, but not in great numbers in Britain, it seems clear. Will other methods be employed? Yes, but again the opportunities seem likely to be rather limited.

One thing seems absolutely certain for British educational evaluators: they will continue to gaze across the Atlantic and to be filled with a mixture of admiration, amazement and incredulity at what they see happening in America. Maybe their American counterparts will sometimes feel the same way, if for quite different reasons.

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